DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 050 202 UD 011 488

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TITLE Human Resources for Human Services in the Ghetto--An Experience in Summer Camping.
PUB DATE May 69
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the National Conference on Social Welfare, New York City, May 28, 1969
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EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Disadvantaged Youth, *Resident Camp Programs, Social Services, *Summer Programs
IDENTIFIERS Camp PAART, *Connecticut

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with a tragedy in the field of human services. The tragedy lies in the fact that a program with a fair modicum of success will not be continued because the decision-makers in the state government concerned with this area decided with insufficient justification to end this program after the summer of 1968. Six hundred boys, nine to 14 years of age, from the poverty ghettos of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford, Connecticut, were served during that summer in a sleep-away camp in the heart of the Connecticut Valley resort area. Camp PAART (Poverty Area Adolescent Recreation and Training Program) was staffed by 15 senior counselors and 60 junior counselors, 16 to 19 years old, from the same ghetto areas. The financial support came from an insurance company, a national foundation, a business and commerce council, a local trade association, and the State of Connecticut. The camp program served two groups: the junior counselors who, in addition to the opportunities involved in providing a service, earned a good weekly salary; and, the 600 campers. The dramatic changes that occurred in the junior counselors when they had the opportunity to help others opened new visions of the future for themselves. The program also demonstrated the viability of people with personal problems helping others with similar problems. Camp PAART was deemed a success. (Author)

ED050202

HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HUMAN SERVICES IN THE GHETTO--AN EXPERIENCE IN SUMMER CAMPING*

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Goroff, Norman N., HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HUMAN SERVICES IN THE GHETTO--AN EXPERIENCE IN SUMMER CAMPING, presented at the National Conference on Social Welfare, May 28, 1969, 17 pages, available from the author, University of Connecticut, School of Social Work, West Hartford, Conn. 06117

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UD 011488

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This paper will deal with a tragedy in the field of human services. The tragedy lies in the fact that a program with a fair modicum of success will not be continued because the decision makers in the state governmental unit concerned with this area decided with insufficient justification not to pursue it after the summer of 1968.

Six hundred boys 9 to 14 years of age from the poverty ghettos of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven and Stamford were served during that summer in a sleep-away camp in the heart of the Connecticut Valley resort area. The camp, known as the Poverty Area Adolescent Recreation and Training Program "Camp PAART" was staffed by fifteen senior counselors and sixty junior counselors, 16 - 19 year olds all from the same ghetto areas. The financial support came from an insurance company, a national foundation, a business and commerce council, a local trade association and the State of Connecticut. The four private sources each provided 25% of the funds which were matched on a 2 to 1 basis by the state funding agency. In addition, the Governor's Youth Opportunity Committee secured 60 summer positions for the junior counselors from the State Department of Parks and Forestry.

The idea for the program started with a neighborhood council in one of the four cities. Once the general concept was developed, a proposal was written by the staff of the council and the process of obtaining financial support from the private sector as a pre-condition for public support

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was underway. An employee of the council and a volunteer spent a little over a month talking to CAP agencies in many cities in the state. Three additional agencies agreed to participate in the program and a formal proposal was submitted in March to the state funding agency. The Community Renewal Team of Greater Hartford was designated as the conduit agency.

Initial Complications

A privately owned facility in "Central" Connecticut was obtained as the site for the camp. The site, a former family style resort was being converted into a "camp". The owner of the camp was involved in legal action resulting from a dissolved partnership. This situation caused considerable problems for the program and was not formally resolved until July 2 when a contract was signed with the owner.

To complicate matters further, the State Bonding Commission did not appropriate the state share of the budget until June 20, 1968. This meant that no staff could be hired until the required funds were available. The sixty junior counselors were recruited, fifteen from each of the four participating cities, before then because their salaries were assured from another state budget.

Each of the four cities recruited "hard core" adolescents, many of them high school dropouts, some of whom had been involved the previous summer in "violent incidents" in their respective cities. One city recruited all the members of an organized club. Other cities attempted to "break up" organized "gangs" by recruiting the core members from several groups in their city. Little, if any, attention was paid to the requirements of a job as junior counselor in their selection.

The original proposal called for a two week pre-camp training period for the junior counselors to be conducted in the four cities. Two of the four cities provided "some training". A ten day period of pre-camp training at the camp site was to begin on Thursday, June 20, but the public share of the budget had not yet been appropriated. Even after the funds had been made available, the legal entanglements surrounding the camp site prevented the use of the site until July 1.

Between Friday, June 21 and Friday, June 28, the director, four assistant directors and fifteen senior counselors were recruited in the four cities. After arriving at the camp site on July 1, the staff worked the whole week, setting up beds, cutting grass, cleaning the area, and scores of other tasks required to put the facility in reasonable shape for the arrival of the first of four groups of campers who would remain for a two week period. Although one might note that "working together" could be beneficial in terms of developing a feeling of unity, morale, the involvement of the staff in these housekeeping tasks prevented the intensive week of pre-camp training that had been planned from being carried out. Thus, the first contingent of campers arrived on Sunday, July 7 and the "experimental program" was underway.

The writer was engaged as a special consultant to the project on June 10. It was his responsibility to engage the staff, work with the CAP agencies in the four cities in recruiting campers, establish the administrative structure and procedures, order equipment and supplies, work with the campground owner in regard to those services she had contracted to supply, prepare an outline for an ongoing staff training program and be available as the liaison person between the camp program, the conduit agency and the state funding agency.

The balance of this paper will focus on the process of helping the junior counselor learn the appropriate behavior for the role of counselor, the relationship of the camp as a closed system to the four cities, the relationship of the professional consultant to the staff, the relationship of the camp to the local community and the recommendations made at the conclusion of the summer.

Senior Staff

The camp director had experience in working with "hard core" adolescents previously as a counselor in a training institution for delinquent boys. Two of the four assistant directors had some previous experience in Boy Scout camping. The other two assistant directors were high school teachers with no previous camping experience.

The senior counselors were, except for one, college students. Eleven of the fifteen counselors were black and came from the four participating cities. Three white counselors were from Ivy League colleges, the fourth from the State University. One white counselor was assigned to supervise the pool area, two of the others became involved with the photography activity. The fourth became an assistant director in August when one of the black assistant directors resigned to accept a football coaching position in a high school in Florida.

The black counselors had attended or were attending colleges and universities in the state and in the South. These counselors were assigned two to a building as head counselors for the building. A building housed from thirty to fifty campers plus seven to twelve Jay Cees.

Hiring college students as senior counselors was part of the plan to provide the Jay Cees with role models and a reference group of blacks "who were making it." Although in all of the four ghettos there existed a group of blacks who were college students or college graduates, the Jay Cees had little contact with them in their own cities.

One unanticipated consequence of this was to create two sub-systems among the Jay Cees and a differential response by the senior counselors to the two sub-groups. One sub-group, about a third of the Jay Cees, seemed to develop a commitment to their roles. There was a modification in their time perspective. They began to focus on the future, both in relation to their own educational goals and to continuing working with children. The boys all registered with the Connecticut Talent Assistance Cooperative, a federally funded project aimed at assisting students from deprived areas to pursue higher education.

The senior staff related easily as peers to this group of Jay Cees. The linkage between the senior staff and this group was such as to make it difficult to distinguish between them. Five of these Jay Cees were promoted to senior counselor as vacancies occurred as a result of resignations or job changes.

The second and larger sub-system among the Jay Cees seemed to be motivated by monetary considerations. This group did not see themselves as primarily providing a service to others as much as "making bread because the man wants to keep his cities cool." The senior staff had considerably more difficulty relating to this group. Tensions developed between them that on occasion erupted into the destruction of property at the camp.

Camp Structure

It had been decided that we would try to establish the camp as a closed system. The difficulty in this was the fact that the camp facility was located in the heart of the resort town of "Central", twenty-five miles from Hartford and forty miles from New Haven. In order to minimize the need to go into town for candy, cigarettes, soda, etc., we established a canteen on the camp grounds. No one was allowed to leave the camp unless it was for a planned activity with the prior approval of the administrative staff.

It was felt that if the boys were to learn the necessary behavior to function as junior counselors, it would be important to minimize the influence of their peer groups in their respective cities. It was recognized that there would be some discontinuities in norms between their peer groups in the city and the norms that were to be established at the camp. Attempts were made to establish immediately that their purpose in being at the camp was to help the campers have a good time. The director asked the Jay Cees "whether black kids from the ghettos can have a good time at camp with black people from the same ghettos as counselors or do we have to look elsewhere for help?" He thus defined the situation so as to place the adolescent Jay Cee in the center of this endeavor. High expectations had been established and they were provided opportunities to try to meet these expectations. New roles can only be learned when opportunities to play these roles are provided.

In the six day period prior to the arrival of the campers, fifteen of the adolescents returned home. Two of the boys asked to be returned because they were addicts. Three boys were caught smoking marijuana and sent home.

There were no other incidents of smoking marijuana. The other ten boys went home because they were not prepared to stay away from their cities as long as required, did not clearly understand the nature of the job when they agreed to come, or demonstrated that they could not function under the structure the director had established.

The four CAP agencies were asked to provide replacements for the adolescents who went home. We received seven replacements for the fifteen that left.

Two patterns of staffing were established. Jay Cees were encouraged to volunteer for activity areas during a major portion of the day. This enabled the Jay Cees to function in program areas in which they had some competence. Although this tended to limit the range of activities initially, it provided the Jay Cees with some security in their capacity and focused their attention on learning the behavior required of their role. Athletic activities, swimming, baseball, basketball, football, volley ball, tennis and handball, plus arts and crafts were the areas covered.

The other pattern of staffing involved assigning campers to junior counselors from their hometown for their basic bunk arrangement. One junior counselor was assigned four campers. This basic unit lived and ate their meals together.

One of the major limitations of this pattern was to segregate the campers and junior counselors on the basis of their home city. This tends to exaggerate differences and some competitiveness developed. After the first trip, the campers were assigned to bunks based on age homogeneous groups. However, the junior counselors from each city tended to be congregated in one of the five large houses that were used for sleeping quarters.

Ome major problem that developed was homesickness on the part of campers, the overwhelming majority of whom had not been away from home before. The junior counselors proved extremely successful in working with these youngsters. Although campers knew that they could go home before the end of the trip, few of them did so after the junior counselor had become involved. The capacity of the Jay Cees to empathize with the campers and to help them over the difficult periods was extraordinary. This was true for almost all of the Jay Cees.

The basic mechanism utilized by the Jay Cees in dealing with the campers seemed to be the expression of warmth through body contact. There was much "horse play" with the campers, carrying of campers, and other forms of touch communication. One youngster who came crying to the camp director wanting to go home, was immediately adopted by a Jay Cee from his neighborhood who carried him away to the field. The camper and the Jay Cee started to chase one another and being wrestled to the ground when caught. This play continued for some time. For the next few days, the two seemed inseparable until the camper began to drift away in the company of other campers. This particular camper returned for a second two week stay after he succeeded in overcoming his initial homesickness.

Another Jay Cee who worked in the office and had a small private room in the administrative staff house, took a "homesick" camper into the room with him for several nights. Many of the Jay Cees had their own problems and this very fact seemed to make them very sensitive to the particular problems of the campers. Although most of the Jay Cees could not conceptualize what the problem was, they seemed to have a capacity for intuitive identification with those campers who were having problems.

Recruitment of Campers

Every attempt was made to make it as easy as possible for campers to come to the camp. Bureaucratic procedures were kept to the barest essentials. An application listing the name, address, emergency telephone and any unusual medical condition was all that was required. Although the administrative staff of the camp would have preferred to have advance notice of who was coming to camp, it became obvious that this would be impossible. Parents and boys who completed the simple registration form in advance would not show up at the scheduled time to leave for camp. Others who had not registered in advance would appear and be taken to camp after completing the application on the spot.

Although we received an approximate number of campers from each city who would be coming to camp on the Friday before the start of the trip, we did not know who would be at the camp until the buses arrived on Sunday.

The task of grouping campers, assigning them to buildings, to individual rooms and to the Jay Cees required most of the day on Sunday. The confusion created by this "on the spot" grouping of campers did not have any lasting negative effect. There was a "looseness" in the camp which provided campers with the opportunity to pursue their own interests. The structure established by the administrative staff for the Jay Cees was based on rather firm restriction involving leaving camp without approval. The program structure for the campers was similar to waht they might find in their neighborhoods. Campers could move freely in activities in accordance with their interests. Meals were the only specifically scheduled activity that all had to adhere to. As the summer progressed, modifications in serving of meals to enable freer planned movement away from the camp were instituted.

The facilities at the camp did not permit overnight sleep-outs. A state park on the Connecticut River, five miles from the camp was utilized for sleep-outs. Fewer than 20% of the campers had ever been on such an overnight. This was a highpoint of their stay at the camp.

Fewer than 10% of the campers had visisted Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, Mystic Seaport, Gillette Castle and other such places, trips to which became an integral part of the program. Although most of the places that were visited are within traveling distance from the campers' home cities, few had ever been to them. The impression that the campers were "ghetto bound" and that their view of the world was limited to their immediate surroundings seems justified.

No limit was placed on how many two week sessions an individual camper may attend. As long as there was room at the camp, which was never filled to capacity, a camper was free to return as frequently as he desired. More than 50 individuals stayed at camp for a period varying from four to eight weeks. Two of the campers did not return home during the break, but remained at the camp for the complete eight week period.

In order to facilitate the recruitment of campers, two volunteer Jay Cees were sent back to each of the four participating cities and encouraged to visit playgrounds, housing projects and other gathering places to tell potential campers about the camp. This effort resulted in doubling the number of campers enrolled for the second session of the camp.

The Role of the Consultant

The initial focus of the consultant was to assist in establishing the administrative procedure and structure at the camp. None of the staff members that were hired had any previous administrative experience. The first

few weeks of the program, the consultant was extremely active in many aspects of the operation. However, as the director and the assistant directors took over more of the responsibilities, the consultant became less active, and towards the end of the summer he was able to take a week's leave without concern over the operation of the camp.

In this situation, it was essential that the consultant be able to sense when the director felt ready to take over responsibilities and move aside. It was also crucial that when he was active, to do so in such a manner as not to undermine the authority or status of the director.

The consultant was very careful not to make any decisions involving other staff members and camp policy. Questions which Jay Cees, campers, or senior counselors asked him were directed to the director or his assistants. Much of the work of the consultant was done on an intimate basis with the director. Lines of communication were direct and informal.

An informal division of labor developed in which the consultant was the "outside man" while the director was the "inside man" to use an analogy from business. Being the "outside man" involved the consultant in working with the professionals from the four participating CAP agencies. We found that there was an overabundance of experts, each eager to share his "knowledge" with the director. This was due in part to the fact that having been on the "operating line" in their own agencies, they did not know how to play a role other than supervisor. They tended to be super-sensitive to negative comments regarding the program.

A regular bi-weekly meeting involving representatives from the four CAP agencies, the liaison person from the state funding agency, the camp director, two assistant directors, a Jay Cee from each city and the consultant, who was the chairman, was established.

The first meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the rationale underlying the structure that was established at the camp. Modifications that were suggested were incorporated into the operation. As a result, there was a substantial decrease in the proffering of advice. One of the most difficult things for the professionals was to recognize that the traditional group centered pattern of camp structure needed to be modified in order to make the best use of our homan resources and facilities.

Discontinuities between Camp and Back Home

It has been mentioned that it was anticipated that there would be discontinuities in norms between the camp as a "closed" system and the peer groups in the city. Although there was a range of adherence to the norms that were established at the camp, the failure to simultaneously attempt to intervene in the Jay Cee's peer groups in the city resulted in conflict and tensions for the Jay Cees. The decision had been made to allow staff to have days off at the time of the trip break. Most of the staff and campers returned to their cities on a Friday morning and returned to the camp Sunday afternoon. This weekend "fling" would bring the junior counselors in contact with their peers in the city. They would quickly revert to the norms of their peers in the city and would then have to readjust to the norms of the camp. The two sets of norms were not necessarily congruent and the tensions that this created proved somewhat difficult for the Jay Cees to handle. At the beginning of the fourth and last period, the junior counselors had been at the camp for seven weeks and the tension seemed greater than at any previous time. Typical of most "camp cycles of morale", all the staff were becoming weary and a little more "on edge". As a result, a dispute between junior counselors who came as a club and the Jay Cees from

another city quickly escalated into what threatened to become an "everybody" against the "club" group fight. The quick intervention of the director and two of the supervisory staff prevented this from happening. However, before they could intervene, several blows had been thrown and a lot of commotion was created.

One of the boys from the organized club had become a senior counselor. Although he ranked high among the senior staff, he had lost status in his peer group. The Jay Cees from the club were part of the sub-system that did not have a firm commitment to their service role. He had become a "marginal" man in his group. He was in an extremely awkward position. He did not participate in the fight, nor did he help break it up.

One of the employees of the camp owner called the state police. Thirty-two troopers responded and surrounded the camp. The officer in charge was told by the camp director that everything was under control and no assistance was needed. He refused to allow the troopers to enter the camp. After being satisfied that everything was in order, most of the troopers left. However, as a precautionary measure, the director sent the club group home with the troopers.

The boy who had become a senior counselor elected to return with the club. However, he was back in camp the following day. The club group did not return for the remainder of the summer. Meanwhile, a local "police reporter" picked the story up from the state police barracks blotter report and rapidly the story spread through the radio and newspapers that a "riot" had occurred between a gang of adolescents at the camp in Central." The next day the camp was besieged by the boys' parents, by representatives from the four CAP agencies, the private funding source in two of the cities and

the state funding agency. All the parents were quickly reassured when they spoke with their children, the counselors and the junior counselors from their city. No boy was taken home by his parents. The other officials were equally satisfied that the incident was blown far out of proportion and distorted beyond any semblance of reality.

Two other incidents illustrate the effects of the discontinuities of norms. In July, after returning to camp from a visit home, a small group of Jay Cees became very angry when their pay checks were delayed. They acted out their anger by damaging some of the buildings. The director terminated their employment and returned them to their respective cities. Two of the CAP agencies insisted upon returning the boys to the camp. The director, with support from the consultant, remained firm in his decision.

In contrast, a Jay Cee who was part of the sub-group that had made the commitment to service, upon returning from a visit home, tore a bolted door off its hinges. He readily admitted doing it, helped repair it and paid for any material required to complete the work.

The community in which the camp was located had been concerned about it since the beginning of the summer. The Jay Cees in their relation to residents demonstrated a high degree of inner control and discipline. There were no incidents involving residents and Jay Cees in any conflict during the summer. Nevertheless, the day following the erroneous report of a "riot" at the camp, the chairman of the town Board of Selectmen wrote a letter which included in part the following:

> "We must give credit to the director and the staff for the tremendous job they have done . . . Many of these people (visitors to the resort area) come from areas where there has been racial unrest and as soon as they find that a program of this type is near the resort at which

they are staying they hesitate to return . . . I cannot say the boys have caused any great trouble except creating unrest in the area . . . It has reached a point that whatever happens, the blame goes to "Camp PAART". . . I know that this camp was not in the best condition when you started but if it will be standing in September is a question. I am not looking at the camp as black or white . . ."

In an attempt to provide public recognition for the job the junior counselors had performed, a family day was held on Sunday, August 25. The Governor, the Commissioner of the state funding agency and four hundred parents, brothers, sisters and friends of the campers and the adolescent junior counselors attended a special award ceremony. Although the press and television were invited, no one from the news media attended and no mention of the event appeared in any form.

The Future

At the last meeting of the group representing the CAP agencies, the state funding agency and the camp administration and staff, plans were formulated for the future. The plans were based on an assessment of the current program. The camp program had served two groups; the Jay Cees, who in addition to the opportunities involved in providing a service, earned a good weekly salary; and second, the six hundred campers.

The dramatic changes that occurred in the Jay Cees when they found the opportunity to help others, opened new visions of the future for themselves, were a major contribution of the program.

The program also demonstrated the viability of people with personal problems helping others with similar problems.

Camp "PAART" had been deemed a "success".

It was anticipated that there would be approximately $30,000 of unexpended funds from the 1968 summer program. According to the matching formula, the four participating CAP agencies would receive $2500 each, and the state funding agency would receive $20,000.

Three alternatives were discussed: 1) end the entire program on August 30; 2) repeat the project in the same form next year; 3) attempt to establish a permanent camp association. The unanimous decision was to attempt to establish a permanent camp association to conduct a year-round program. Towards this end, each of the four CAP agencies agreed to allow their share of the unexpended funds to be used to try to retain the state share for the expenses involved in setting up a state-wide organization.

The request to implement this decision was forwarded to the state funding agency on August 29th. The request included the following:

1) A permanent state-wide camping association be incorporated.

2) The board of directors of this association be composed of one member from each of the target areas in those cities participating in the program.

The purpose of this suggestion was to place in the hands of people who were receiving the service, the policy making functions. Considerable interest had been expressed by the parents of campers in having the program continue. Many parents had said that they felt comfortable and at ease in this setting and with the staff when they visited the camp. Parent visiting day spontaneously developed on the middle Sunday of each trip.

3) The current camp director be engaged on a pro-tem basis as the director of the association.

4) Exploration be undertaken to obtain a site for the camp, with special attention paid to publicly owned land.

A time-table and a budget was included.

There subsequently ensued a series of events in which a constant flow of questions was asked, answered, new questions asked and additional answers given. These questions were asked by the officials in the state funding agency. In the meantime, six weeks had passed and we were now in mid-October. Faced with what he correctly assessed as a tremendous reluctance on the part of the state funding agency to establish a permanent organization, the director left the state to accept a job elsewhere. In the meantime, the conduit agency voted not to accept this role in the future. The law establishing the state funding agency states that only existing human resources agencies can receive funds for programs such as Camp PAART. None of the other three CAP agencies wanted to accept the role of "conduit agency".

Thus by the process of delay, the enthusiasm built up as a result of the success of the experience of the summer of 1968 was dissipated. As of now, there are no plans to repeat the program and certainly no desire in the state funding agency to institutionalize the program to give it stability and continuity.

We continue to put our fingers in the dike whenever we see a hole until the immediate threat of flooding is over. Then we proceed to forget about it until the next emergency. Obviously this patchwork approach will not make a lasting contribution to the solution of the problem of either developing human resources nor human services for the people caught in the web of poverty in the ghettos of our cities.

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